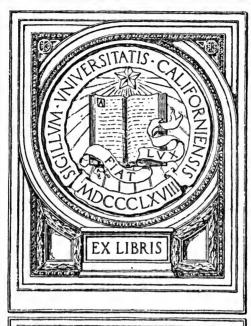
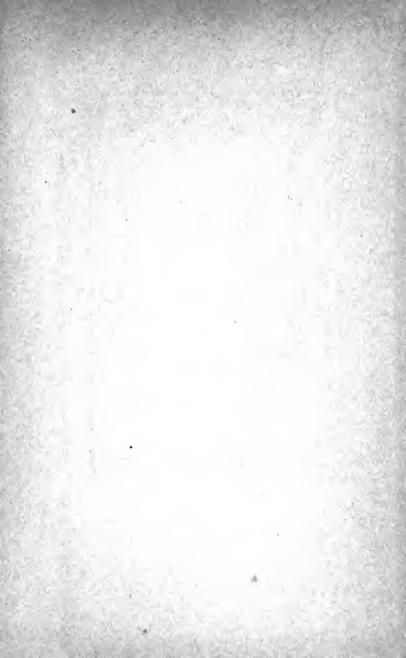
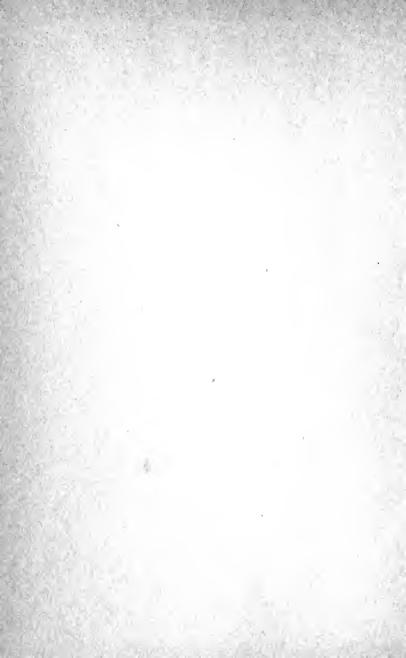
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By Anna hempetead Branch

ROSE OF THE WIND.

THE SHOES THAT DANCED, AND OTHER POEMS.

THE HEART OF THE ROAD, AND OTHER POEMS.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
Boston and New York

THE HEART OF THE ROAD and Other Poems

BY ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH



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TO
MY MOTHER
AND
FATHER



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THE HEART OF THE ROAD

I JOURNEY on an endless quest, The eager miles are swift to run, While up the hill and toward the west My red leagues travel against the sun.

Behold, one journeyed in the night, He sang amid the wind and rain; My wet sands gave his feet delight. When will that traveler come again?

Some house them with their kin inside, Some habit to the ends of earth; Strange is the heart of them that bide, But I was fugitive from birth.

The folk that tarry are not my sons; My heart is all for them that roam; My thought goes with the wandering ones That spend the night from home.

The weary folk lead to and fro, And he is dear that takes no rest;

THE HEART OF THE ROAD

Mine are those feet that come and go, But, lo, my firstborn was my best!

"Heart of the Road," I heard him sing,
"Whose thought is swift, whose ways are wild,
The mother of my wandering
Shall have the pilgrim for her child."

How did he find me where I lay, Remote, untraversed, and forespent? How blithe I journey since the day That he conceived the ways I went!

That day that he fared forth alone His feet besought me in their need. I cried out of my dust and stone, "Lo, my own breast shall make thee bleed!"

I cried out from my rock and steep,
"My child, I cannot give thee rest!"
He moved the stone that grieved my sleep,
And soothed the sharp thorn from my breast.
Therefore my other sons are dear,
But still the firstborn is the best.

My will is in them night and day, Men and the restless sons of men. The paths are smooth wherein they stray. When will that traveler come again?

Thick as the dust, from unborn years, I see my coming children throng.

That one who breaks the way with tears

Many shall follow with a song.

Nor bread, nor scrip, nor staff had he When he went out from the gray town. Now heavy folk that traverse me Burdened with wealth go up and down.

Each unto each I hear them call With idle speech and empty boast, And I have ease to give them all Save him that I did love the most.

But when one passes in the night,
And tarries not by any door,
My leagues beat upward for delight,—
Perchance that traveler comes once more.

But when one journeys over me, Nor staff, nor scrip, through wind and rain, I reach my dim hands out to see If those old feet have come again.

4 THE HEART OF THE ROAD

Therefore upon an endless quest My eager miles are swift to run, While up the hill and toward the west My red leagues travel against the sun.

THE THOUGHT OF THE LITTLE BROTHER

MATTHEW, Mark, Luke, and John, Bless the bed that I lie on. All night long in bed I lie With four disciples standing by.

Matthew's clothes shine like the sun; He guards me well, and he is one. Mark is two, and Luke is three, And dear St. John smiles down on me.

(Brother Berthold that cannot rest, For the cross of thorns pierced in his breast, Walks all night with haggard eyes And "Lord have mercy, mercy!" cries.)

Crimson and blue and green have they,
But I must go in stuff of gray;
Blue and green and red and gold,
Their warm robes shut me from the cold.
They all bend over and talk and sing,
And I can tell them everything.

6 THOUGHT OF THE LITTLE BROTHER

Brother Benedictus says
A good child should be filled with praise
From morning-song till even-song,
And holy dreams the whole night long.
For if you dream of Jesus, then
You will be blesséd among men.

So at night I shut my eyes
When the dear Lord walks in Paradise,
Saying "Christ, Christ, Christ!" to bring him
near.

If he were little, would he hear?
And would his mother tell him nay
If I should ask him out to play?
If I could dream of Jesus, then
I should be blesséd among men!

But — the thorn has a flower by the old gray wall, Ursyne throws me her scarlet ball, The blind priest says, "Did an apple fall?" I cannot dream of Christ at all!

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Bless the bed that I lie on.

Once Mark leaned down to me and smiled
"The Child Christ dreamed such dreams, dear
child!"

Brother Benedictus says
There is no life save only praise;
He says the poppies red as flame
Grew so to mind me of my shame.
"It was thy thought that had him die,
Thyself unborn did crucify."
And then I cannot help but cry—
That let the dear Lord Jesus die.

But Luke had a garment all of red. He hugged and kissed me, and he said, "He loves not that his child should weep, Sleep, little Brother," — and I sleep.

Once Ursyne on a cloth of blue
Must stitch, as all girl children do.
She pricked her finger, and the thread
That was so white was turned to red.
The mother would not let her cry,
Nor break the thread and lay it by:—
"For Christ will love thy work," she said,
"And bless it where the blood was shed."

(Out in the cold Brother Berthold
Walks through the night, so haggard and old;
If a cock should crow I should hear him call,—
"Peter and Paul—pray for us all—
Pray for us all!")

8 THOUGHT OF THE LITTLE BROTHER

Brother Benedictus says
That if we walk the paths of praise
We may meet angels there! I know
For my own self that this is so.

To-day I lost my ball, and where
My eyes might search it was not there.
But since we should give praise for all,
I praised God that I lost my ball.
And then a lovely angel came,
With long green wings and locks of flame.
Out of the grass where I'd searched an hour
He plucked it like a scarlet flower;
And then I kissed him, and his wings
Drooped round me like dear living things.

Brother Berthold is best of all.

He planted brambles by the wall;

He scourged himself, and every stone
In his dark cell has blood thereon;

He blinded his own eyes, that so
He might see angels come and go.
I told him all those blessed things,—

The ball, the kiss, the darling wings.

He cried aloud. "Child, child," said he,
"Would those great wings might comfort me!"

(Out in the cold Brother Berthold Walks all night so haggard and old. He beats his breast, with sightless eyes, And, "Mercy, mercy, mercy!" cries.)

Brother Benedictus says
There is no life save only praise;
And there is not a child too young
To serve Him with a golden tongue.
Be we man or beast or clod,
Praise God — praise God!

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Bless the bed that I lie on.

Blue and green and red and gold, Their warm robes shut me from the cold.

Peter and Paul, pray for us all!
'Twas a bough of ripe quinces hung over the wall!
Mark is two, and Luke is three;
John had a rose, but he gave it to me!

Ursyne's got a gown o' gray—
They let her into the court to play.
(Let me dream of Christ I pray)
I picked her a quince to eat to-day—

THE ROAD 'TWIXT HEAVEN AND HELL

Last night my lord was not at home—
"Nay; I was out on moor and fell,"
And thy black horse is frothed with foam,
As thou didst drive him well—
"He galloped all night, till dawn grew white,
On the road 'twixt heaven and hell."

How does it look along that road?
"The chasm is steep and sheer,
Slippery for footing and heavily trod,
And the rocks are ragged and drear.
The wind of death blows over the heath
And into the soul like fear."

What didst thou see along the track?

"A scurry of leaves wind-tossed,

White like faces thrust out of the black,

Thinned and edged with the frost.

They whirled about till they all went out

Into the night and were lost."

What was that sound I thought I heard When I was lain in bed?

"Maybe the sullen rock that stirred Beneath my horse's tread.

Three times, I say, that rock gave way And plunged among the dead."

The first time that the rock gave way, What was it kept thee back?

"'T was thy soft hand upon the rein That held me to the track.

Thy face shone white along the night And laughed out of the black."

Nay, then, it was no hand of mine, For I was safe in bed!

"I swear by God that hand was thine By which my steed was led,

Else were I lost and a thin ghost That smokes among the dead!

"With desolate sighs that way was full, And I rode there alone.

Sometimes there was a grinning skull That I mistook for stone,

And every rock my steed's hoofs struck Was thin like empty bone."

The next time that the rock gave way, What kept thee from the rim?

"My struggling steed strove hard for speed; He leaped from brim to brim.

To my cold breast my child clung fast; I could not fall with him!"

Nay, then, it was no child of thine, For he is not yet born!

"And had it not been child of mine, That way had been forlorn.

I held him tight through the dark night, And even until the morn.

"The fear that bounded close behind Was like a lean dog held at bay.

I felt his hot breath on the wind, And I dared not to stay.

Like a bloodhound that seeks the wound, He followed all the way."

The third time that the rock gave way, What was it helped thee then?

"That path that broke before, behind, Cried out like living men.

And far below, like sluggish snow, Slow things moved through the fen. "The woman running at my side,
Who had a bleeding breast,
Even as a star swings off the tide,
She cleared that chasm deep and wide,
Nor stopped one whit to rest.
We whirled behind; like the storm-wind
We followed in her quest.

"I felt her tears blown through my heart,
Cold as a blast of winter rain.
The blood she shed had left me dead,
Had I not eased her pain.
I pressed my kisses on her mouth,
And we sped on again!"

That woman running at thy side,
Why should she bleed for thee?

I had rather that thou last night had died,
Than not be saved by me.

My breast is whole as mine own soul,
And is as fair to see!

"What then? dost thou forget that road All blackened with the storm? Hast thou no memory for the goad That pierced thy hurrying form? Thyself for cold cried in the wold; Hast thou so soon grown warm?"

14 'TWIXT HEAVEN AND HELL

That, in God's truth, my soul went out
To help thee in that need,
I cannot then keep more in doubt,
Since thou hast seen me bleed;
But that in the wold I cried for cold
I have forgot indeed!

If, in God's truth, my spirit went
To where thy course was set,
I have forgotten how I was spent,
My wounds I do forget;
But there shall be one memory—
Thy kiss is on me yet!

Last night my lord was not at home —

"Nay; I was out on the moor and fell."

And thy black horse is frothed with foam,

As thou didst drive him well —

"He galloped all night, till the dawn grew white,

On the road 'twixt heaven and hell."

THE SHADOW OF A CLOUD

All day the small cloud floated by Like a white bird beneath the sun. There was never a cloud in all the sky As white as that least one.

"All day long," quoth the little gray shadow, "I climb this hillside green and steep. The shepherd sings to his flocks all day, But I am not his to keep.

My ways are wide, though I be gray As the least wayworn sheep."

"I dream, I dream," quoth the little gray shadow,
"And in my dreams there be
A blowing cloak and the breath of a pipe,
And many a one like me.
My shepherd is in my dreams; my ways
Are with his song," quoth he.

" Along the road o' the wind and sun I journey up the mountain-side,

16 THE SHADOW OF A CLOUD

And there are flowers or dust or stone In the places where I bide, And there is wind in the thick green grass, And birds at eventide."

All day the small cloud floated by Like a white lily under the sun. There was never a cloud in all the sky As white as that least one.

"I dream, I dream," quoth the little gray shadow,
"In sooth, I do not know,
But on those wild wind-hills I see
A white cloud come and go.
Like wind in grass amid my dreams
The stars weave to and fro.

"My heart is strange," quoth the little gray shadow,

"My thoughts are strange and far.

The bird in the grass has brushed his wings,
Sings he, against a star!"

The shadow i' the grass has leagues to run
Where the brown earth pastures are.

"I dream, I dream," quoth the little gray shadow, That slipped over water and stone. "All day I sing to myself in my heart
That I travel or tarry alone,
But the bird in the grass has touched a cloud,
And my ways are not my own!"

All day the small cloud floated by
Alone in the wide space under the sun.
There was never a cloud in all the sky
As white as that least one.

THE KEEPER OF THE HALFWAY HOUSE

Many an one has come and bode But to leave me sorrow. With the dawn they take the road And I say "Good morrow."

"Tell us, keeper of the Inn,
Hast thou rest inside?"
These shall come where those have been,
And not one shall bide.

They will linger for a night At this hearth of mine, Stay their souls unto delight With my bread and wine.

Even he I loved the best Might not loiter here, So I sped my parting guest With abundant cheer. "Brother, what 's the road," they say,
"We must travel on?"
So I show them up the way
Where I have not gone.

Think of me, all ye that go, Ye that tarry not! But up the road a league or so And lo, they have forgot.

So I do not smile to see One knocking at the door. That one in sooth shall fare from me As they have fared before.

So it is I am content, Beside a vacant chair. Long before the day is spent One will be sitting there.

"Tell us, Keeper of the Inn,
Hast thou rest inside?"
These shall come where those have been
And not one shall bide.

HEART OF MY SONG

HEART of my song — if my own heart
Lies barren for its pain,
And all my thoughts shall beat apart
Over an empty plain,
Thy thoughts like singing birds shall fly
Athwart my falling rain.

Heart of my heart — since God has said
Mine shall not throb alone,
I cannot leave thy wide, deep ways
To which my soul has grown.
Like wind among the leaves thy mood
Is wrought into my own.

I feel no splendor and no might
That gives not thee the praise.
Thy lordly blood has set my own
Into more stately ways.
Thy centuries blow from out my eyes
The thick dust of the days.

Thy thoughts are in my thoughts as sound
Is in the rain, and so
Thy memories are all around,
Whether I will or no.
I have a dream of dawns that broke
Hundreds of years ago.

I have before I yet was born
A thought of those vague years.
Thou who didst breathe in God's first morn,
Who beat in God's first spheres,
Art in my dreams for early light,
And in my heart for tears.

For even as the wind that blows
And sings from star to star,
May help the timid grass that grows,
That cannot fly so far,
Thou dwellest in me with the light
Of all the worlds that are.

Heart of my heart, heart of my song,
Though I go wandering,
Thou laughest in me all day long
Like flowers in the spring.
Thou art not saddened by my tears,
But thou art strong to sing.

ALL YE YOUNG POETS

ALL ye young Poets, crowding up with eyes
Yet wistful with the morning, and who throng
Silently yet with the first love of song
And ways made delicate with your surprise,
On whom the seal and the fair promise lies,
Come up to the broad ways where ye belong
Paven with golden echoings and strong
As stalwart stars set close along the skies.
As surely will ye come from the dim years
As changes, seasons, or as unborn daisies.
We doubt these not, nor ye, who are God's own,
But bid ye welcome to our songless spheres
And watch lest he who most deserves our praises
Shall come forsaken, bleeding and alone.

SONNET IN THE NIGHT

Come gently, Sleep, and let me rest to-night With no disturbing dream of angel's wings. Bring no song in thy heart that sings and sings Like a bird amid thy skies of calm delight. Oh wake me not with these, but heal my sight Of inner visions, cure the subtle stings Of too great pleasure, lull the murmurings Of thy dear dreams! Oh, do not shine so bright! For I would rest and stint myself to thought. Nay, get thee from my sleep, thou lovely dear! Why wilt thou gather round me so, enringing? And then a voice replies, "His hand has wrought A sound in thy soul's raiment thou dost hear, Poor child, that cannot rid thyself of singing."

THE SILENCE OF THE POETS

I BETTER like that shadowed side of things In which the Poets wrote not; when they went Unto the fullness of their great content Like moths into the grass with folded wings. The silence of the Poets with it brings The other side of moons, and it is spent In love, in sorrow, or in wonderment. After the silence, maybe a bird sings. I have heard call, as Summer calls the swallow, A leisure, bidding unto ways serene To be a child of winds and the blue hazes. "Dream" - quoth the Dreamer - and 't is sweet to follow!

So Keats watched stars rise from his meadows green,

And Chaucer spent his hours among the daisies.

HAUNTED

I AM distraught with singing. In my brain I feel a presence ever, and a might Pursues my soul in flashes of long light Or soft as throbbing of a golden rain, Till my whole spirit melts into refrain And I am wakened even in the night By delicate visions that beset my sight, The clinging sweetness of a perfect strain. I am distraught with singing! Never more Shall I go with my friends in the old ways. In other orbits do my paths belong And other hands will beckon me before. God sets a wonder upon all my days, And I am haunted always by a song.

UNTAMED

Who is there that can pipe up buds unblown,
Who is there that can charm the winds that pass,
And who is there can lead the early grass
To press another way than it has grown?
To many another has my spirit flown,
But never has it found that one, alas!
Who could shed himself on everything that was,
Like wind on water, sunshine upon stone.
These are all haunted by so great a might
No other power can tame them. Their vague
eyes

Are full of dawns and shadows of surprise, And they are aureoled with their own light. Grass has its Heaven and the winds their skies. They wot not of us with their wistful sight.

FORESHADOWED

What? Thou art jealous of my past, while yet I was unknown to thee, while my first years Were sweet without thee, and with my own tears, Not thine, Belovéd, my young eyes were wet? But I can tell thee that before we met Thy splendor dropped athwart those golden spheres Which were my childhood. All my joys and fears

Were strangely double. I shall not forget That look I loved so in my mother's eyes. Her glance I think did so contain thine own I felt a dim foreshadowing cast on me And read thy star concealed amid her skies. I cannot remember that first look alone Without some reminiscences of thee.

WHERE NO THOUGHTS ARE

When all my will drops from me like a shroud From the fair dead when they go up on high, And leaves my soul like sky, blue sky, all sky, Without a wind or sunshine or the loud Incessant flitting of the thoughts that crowd Like swallows to the summer time, then I, Looking straight upward through myself, descry A beautiful face more vague than wind or cloud That from its Heaven searches into mine And bends to me, even as a star to star. But if I think, back will the faint clouds roll. Sometimes I wonder if it be divine — If that be God, up there where no thoughts are — Or if I see the face of my own soul.

DIVINITY

My silences are not my own, for lo
Thy speech is in them always; I abide
In waiting for thee, as the eventide
Expects the dew; and that thou art, I know,
And what thou art I know not, but I go
Hearing thy voice always, far and wide,
Strange in its bidding, not to be denied,
Deeper than thought, since thou wilt have it so,
For when my thoughts are silent every one,
Like vanished rain, and all my heart is bare
Of any wistful dream that comes and goes,
Thy speech falls on me subtle as the sun,
And I receive thee as the summer air
Is touched with the slow blooming of the rose.

I CANNOT QUITE FORGET

Mortality is on me like the sleep
Of one who dreams on banks of pleasant flowers.
I hear the humming of gold-girdled hours
Whirling along the sunshine, feel the deep
And shadowy stillness into which they creep,
Dropping like honeyed bees into their bowers.
Such gracious dreams brings this long sleep of ours,

Such gracious dreams I know not how to weep. The world I have forsaken for my dream. A strange and lingering sweetness haunts me yet, A visionary presence, and a light Creeps 'twixt my eyelids, like the slender beam Piercing the filmy primrose, folded tight, And wrapped in sleep, I cannot all forget.

SONG OF THE WANDERING DUST

We are of one kindred, wheresoe'er we be, — Red upon the highroad or yellow on the plain, White against the sea drift that girts the heavy sea;

Thou hast made us brothers, God of wind and rain!

Yellow all along the fields, hey ho, the morn!
All the throb of those old days lingers in my feet,

Pleasant moods of growing grass and young laugh of the corn,

And the life of the yellow dust is sweet !

When I bend my head low and listen at the ground,

I can hear vague voices that I used to know, Stirring in dim places, faint and restless sound; I remember how it was when the grass began to grow!

32 SONG OF THE WANDERING DUST

We are of one kindred, wheresoe'er we be,—
Red upon the highroad or yellow on the plain,

White against the glistening kelp that girts the heavy sea;

Thou hast made us brothers, God of wind and rain!

Blown along the sea beach! Oh, but those were days!

How we loved the lightning, straight and keen and white!

Bosomed with the ribboned kelp! Hist! through all the ways

Of my brain I hear the sea, calling through the night.

How we used to jostle, braced together each to each,

When the sea came booming, stalwart, up the strand!

Ridged our shoulders, met the thunder, groaned and held the beach!

I thank the God that made me, I am brother to the sand!

We are of one kindred, wheresoe'er we be, — Red upon the highroad or yellow on the plain,

White against the sea drift that girts the heavy sea;

Thou hast made us brothers, God of wind and rain!

Red upon the highroad that travels up to town! I have nigh forgotten how the old way goes. Ay, but I was there once, trampled up and down! Shod feet and bare feet, I was friend to those!

Old feet and young feet, — still within my breast I can feel the steady march, tread, tread, tread!

In my heart they left their blood, — God give them rest!

In my bones I feel the dust raised from their dead!

We are of one kindred, wheresoe'er we be, —
Dumb along the highroad or fashioned in the
brain;

Once my flesh was beaten from the white sand by the sea;

Thou hast made us brothers, God of wind and rain!

Red dust and yellow dust, whither shall we go?

Up the road and by the sea and through the hearts of men!

34 SONG OF THE WANDERING DUST

Red dust and yellow dust, when the great winds blow,

We shall meet and mingle, pass and meet again.

Red dust and yellow dust, I can feel them yet, On my lips and through my soul, fine-grained in my mood.

Still the solemn kinship calls, the old loves will not forget,

And my heart answers back to its blood.

Old dust and strange dust, wheresoe'er we be,— Red along the highroad or yellow on the plain, White against the sea drift that girts the heavy sea,

Thou hast made us brothers, God of wind and rain!

TO A SONG

Whither wouldst thou go, Song? Wilt thou away? Every flock knows its fold, Every bird its spray. Whither wilt thou wander then, Since thou wilt not stay?

Thou art like a wind, Song, Blown from very far Over meadows thick with grass Where soft whisperings are, With the pale light on thee still Shed from many a star.

Over hill and over wold
Whence didst thou blow?
Whither wilt thou hurry, Song?
Dost thou know?
Nay, I will not ask thee then—
Pilgrim in the world of men,
Weary ones and slow—
Thou art sweet, and like the wind
Thou must come and go.

AN UNBELIEVER

All these on whom the sacred seal was set,

They could forsake thee while thine eyes were

wet.

Brother, not once have I believed in thee, Yet having seen I cannot once forget.

I have looked long into those friendly eyes, And found thee dreaming, fragile and unwise. Brother, not once have I believed in thee, Yet have I loved thee for thy gracious lies.

One broke thee with a kiss at eventide, And he that loved thee well has thrice denied. Brother, I have no faith in thee at all, Yet must I seek thy hands, thy feet, thy side.

Behold that John that leaned upon thy breast; His eyes grew heavy and he needs must rest. I watched unseen through dark Gethsemane And might not slumber, for I loved thee best. Peace thou wilt give to them of troubled mind Bread to the hungry, spittle to the blind. My heart is broken for my unbelief, But that thou canst not heal, though thou art kind.

They asked one day to sit beside thy throne. I made one prayer, in silence and alone. Brother, thou knowest my unbelief in thee. Bear not my sins, for thou must bear thine own.

Even he that grieves thee most "Lord, Lord,"
he saith,
So will I call on thee with my last breath!
Brother, not once have I believed in thee.

Yet I am wounded for thee unto death.

The king who dwelt at the old gray hall
A noble lord was he.
He had lands that were broad and treasures from all.

And his kingdoms they were three, But he had never a little child To sit upon his knee.

"Now would that I had a daughter," he said,
"To do what I should say.

She should have a silver comb for her head
And she should laugh alway!

Broidered raiment and cloth o' the gold,
And jewels for night and day!"

He rode by dark and he rode by light, And he rode till the days were three, Until he came to Fairyland, Where the little lost children be, And there he got him a fair girl-child To sit upon his knee. They took off her little gown of green And dressed her in all that was rare. A silken girdle did bind her waist And a golden zone her hair. Gold on the bosom and gold on the hem Of the robe they made her wear.

They gave her a falcon for all her own
And a milk-white steed to ride,
And they let her sit on a shining throne,
With jewels on it for pride.
But whenever she sat and whenever she rode
The king was at her side.

He built her a tower where she might sit Like a dove that rests its wing. He brought her a lute, but she would not play, And a harp but she would not sing. She sat all day with a dream in her eyes Nor laughed at anything.

"Now what wouldst thou have, my fair girl-child, Now what wouldst thou have?" quoth he, "For art thou not mine own little one That sittest upon my knee? And what thou wishest that shalt thou have, For my kingdoms they are three."

"I have jewels to see them shine," she said,
"And a golden zone for my hair,
And why I am sorry I do not know,
Nor, if I knew, should I care.
But I wish that I had the little green gown
That once I used to wear."

"Now dry thine eyes, my fair girl-child, Now dry thine eyes," he said, "For I rode all day and I rode all night Till my good steed dropped dead. But I have brought thee that little green gown With its merry tassels of red."

She was silent at morn and silent at noon With a dream in her eyes alway, And her sleep at night was touched with tears Because she had cried all day, And she wished that she had the little gold ball With which she used to play.

"Now dry thine eyes, my fair girl-child, Now dry thine eyes," quoth he, "And I will get thee that little gold ball, For my kingdoms they are three, And all that I have in my heart and hold Is not too good for thee."

She was silent at noon and silent at eve, But he did not understand. "Say, why dost thou drop the silken leash Of the falcon from thy hand?"

"I would that I had my heart," quoth she, "That I left in Fairvland."

"That thou shalt have, my fair girl-child, For my kingdoms they are three. But how shall I tell which heart is thine Among so many as be?" "The tears I have shed are in it," she said, " And my mother's memory."

"It is not enough, my fair girl-child, Is there no other thing? All have had mothers and all have had tears, And which heart shall I bring?" "Under the laughter and under the tears Is my love for the Fairy King."

"But where shall I find thy heart?" he said. "Child, tell me where it is, For I will have it, if steel be true, So make no mysteries." "It is only the king that can tell thee that, For I left it deep in his."

He rode all day and he rode all night
Till the bright walls he could see.
"O king, I have come for the heart of a child,
From thine own heart," quoth he.
"And I will have it, while steel is true
And my kingdoms they are three."

They fought all day and they fought all night In the land where all is fair.
But the strange king saw it not nor felt
The sweet touch of the air.
An he had this, he had brought the child
And left her always there.

"Now God thee save," cried the Fairy Knight,
"That thou couldst do this sin!
Thou shalt wipe my blood from thy good steel
With a wish that it had not been.
Thou hast pierced my heart," he cried, "and so
The heart of the child within."

He rode all day and he rode all night,
And the first that met him cried,
"Thy child's own falcon flew away
This day at eventide."
And the next one said, "Thy child's white hound
Upon this night hath died."

The third that met him was pale with fear,
And never a word he said.
But the great king spoke as it were news,
"My fair girl-child is dead."
And they showed her asleep in her little green gown
With its merry tassels of red.

The old gray king speaks never a word. He sits in a silent hall. He has lands that are broad and kingdoms three, And treasures from them all. But he sits all day with a dream in his eyes And plays with a golden ball.

THE BLOOMING OF THE ROSE

WHAT is it like, to be a rose?

Old Roses, softly, "Try and see."

Nay, I will tarry. Let me be In my green peacefulness and smile. I will stay here and dream awhile. 'T is well for little buds to dream, Dream—dream—who knows—Say, is it good to be a rose? Old roses, tell me! Is it good?

Old Roses, very softly, "Good."

I am afraid to be a rose!
This little sphere wherein I wait,
Curled up and small and delicate,
Lets in a twilight of pure green,
Wherein are dreams of night and morn
And the sweet stillness of a world
Where all things are that are unborn.

Old Roses, "Better to be born."

I cannot be a bud for long.
My sheath is like a heart full blown,
And I, the silence of a song
Withdrawn into that heart alone,
Well knowing that it shall be sung.
Outside the great world comes and goes —
I think I doubt, to be a rose —

Old Roses, "Doubt? To be a Rose!"

THE DANCE OF ALL DEAD BONES

God rest us all that linger here!

He has bleached us white with the rains of the year,

But this is the night of all good cheer,
Glory Hallelujah!
He fashioned a thing of dust one day,
He blew with the wind of His mouth, they say,
He blessed the fire but cursed the clay,
Hallelujah Amen!

Ribs of the old earth, wracked and rent!
When all her loveliness is spent
And she cannot tell which way it went—
Glory Hallelujah!—
And she is left as thin and pale,
Empty, like us, and white and frail,
She will dance and crackle along the gale,

Their souls dropped off like rain from stone, And whither they ran to, all alone,

Hallelujah Amen!

THE DANCE OF ALL DEAD BONES 47

We cannot tell, for we are but bone,
Glory Hallelujah!
Their wild hearts flickered away like flame,
They left us naked and fit for shame,
For He made the dust that it bear the blame,
Hallelujah Amen!

He made us dumb and cold and blind,
Barren and brutish of our kind,
Witless of sun and rain and wind,
Glory Hallelujah!
When our Lord goes by He goes rough shod,
Yet every stock and turf and sod
Heaves in its place and cries "Praise God,"
Hallelujah Amen!

Those hearts went up with never a sound,
But we rouse and rattle all around,
Dancing a strange dance under the ground,
Glory Hallelujah!
We have fed His fire and this atones,
And we bless our God with the stocks and stones,
For this is the Dance of all Dead Bones,
Hallelujah Amen!

IN THE QUEEN'S GARDEN

QUEEN

Who was it took my favorite rose—
So small and white none else I ween
Had loved her in her world of green
Save winds and all young things that be
As sweet and fine and small as she—
Prithee, who was it took my rose?

FIRST MAID

Mayhap the little page?—
I found him crying at the door
Because an hour or so before
He ran ere yet the grass was dry
Into the garden, and the dew
Had spoiled the buckle on his shoe.

QUEEN

Nay, 't was not the little page;
A child had never thought, I know,
To look into the grass so low;
A boy laughs and by he goes,
'T was not the page that took my rose.

NEXT MAID

It was the fool, I guess!

I'll scold him for his wantonness.

"Merry men all," I heard him sing
'Twixt his strange bits of chattering,

"Let's get flowers, though cold wind blows"—
The fool, dear lady, took your rose.

QUEEN

No, not he! Fools look more high. He would have sought the red one there. Look you, it grows as tall as — I! That little world all green and cool Wherein my white rose sat alway, Had he seen that, and her, I say The fool no longer were a fool. Who was that thief who liked my rose?

THIRD MAID

The Prince, do you suppose?

He gave me — no — I think 't would be
Like him to choose a rose, and he —
Last night I saw him with a rose!

QUEEN

Oh! You saw him, did you, then? It was no page, no fool, I know,

Who passed that red one, proud and tall;
Only a prince's heart, I trow,
Would love my white rose best of all.
You guessed him, you? You saw him, then?
Roses and vandals, girls and men!
Look, look you, sweet, the Prince is near!
And I am gracious, and I ween
He looks to find a loiterer here.
I'll bid him to my garden, dear,
To take her white rose from the queen.

BEFORE THE FAIR

From the crow of the cock to the shut of the day
I toiled most of any;

The cow and the flock and the load of hay
From my few pence took many;
I worked all day in the sweat of my brow,

And only saved a penny.

Here's a penny for my pretty, Sally needs an airing; She shall put a ribbon on And go to get a fairing!

Sally my girl so light she trips,

And she laughs right out for glee;

And her warm lips are such red, red lips,

And I won't be by to see—

But I'll get a promise from Sally my girl,

That she'll kiss no lad but me.

Here's a penny for my pretty, Sally needs an airing; She shall put a ribbon on And go to get a fairing! Her crimson stocking is drawn so tight, Her ankle is plump and fair; She 'll lead the dance till the drop o' night With a posy in her hair. And I can think as I turn my plough,

My girl is the blithest there.

Here's a penny for my pretty, Sally needs an airing; She shall put a ribbon on And go to get a fairing!

LAZARUS

A WOMAN

But let him tell us! Peace, you idle ones, You talk him speechless who is full of news. Lazarus, speak!

THE CROWD

Ay, speak! What is it like? Is it terrible to die? Were you afraid?

A BOY

My grandmother died. She sobbed and shook and groaned
"Have mercy on us!" Then she sweat—

A MOTHER

My child!

Did he go all alone? O Lazarus, speak! Did any come for him? Was he afraid?

A YOUTH

Is it cold outside the body? O my house!

I love thee well that art so warm and close!

MARY

Nay! Once I dreamed -

A MAN

Dreamed — dreamed! And so did I! I flitted naked through a wasting wind. Come, Lazarus, wast thou stricken by that wind?

A WOMAN

Nay — but it is not so! The dead grow chill. Is it not rather like a searching dew, Insidious and sweet like stealing balm?

MARY

I dreamed of peaceful waters. They were still And placid as my own content, and lo When I must needs divide them with my feet They flew away like doves.

A MOTHER

Oh, be thou still!

Lazarus, heed them not! Speak thou to me.

I ask thee of my child! What was the road—

And was there comfort for him at the end?

I held him till the last, so he might feel

Some love about him—touched and kissed his hands.

What after that, O Lazarus, after that?

LAZARUS

I have forgotten, woman. I only know That having died my clothes are full of life. If any have a wound let him come near, And I will give him comfort of my death.

A WOMAN

He smells of the grave! Come back—I am afraid.

A GIRL

What is the look, the other side of the grave? Is there laughter, singing, feasting —

A WOMAN

Foolish one!

Do the dead love us? Do they speak of us? Oh, if they speak of us, what did he say? Lazarus, tell me, and I will believe! I will follow Christ! Has he forgiven me? O Lazarus, Lazarus, wilt thou tell me that?

A MOTHER

Say — has my baby grown? Or is he yet
As I did hold him last? What are his ways?
What prattle has he? Does my child remember?
Ah, had I known thou wast about to die —

A WOMAN

Give word of him, or else thou wert not dead!

Does pity seal thy lips? Does he forgive?

Oh, in his soul there is a grievous wound.

There is no love in Heaven to heal that wound.

Had I been there I had balmed it, being woman,

As God might never do. Didst thou not say

That she that hurt him loved him well? O

thou!

Thou wert not dead! For thou couldst not forget

If he had smiled and said "I do forgive."

LAZARUS

But I was dead and yet I do forget.

CROWD

Let him alone! Revile him! He is one Who having feasted scants his dogs a crumb!

MARY

But ask him not. But lately he has come From warm and delicate airs, color and song, And doubtless we are strange to him; our hearts Seem chill, and even friendliness a cloud Against his deep horizons of delight. Speak softly to him, treat him tenderly, As one new born.

MARTHA

Let him come home with me.

He has traveled far. And I will give him bread,
Raisins, and honey I was wont to stint.

Oh, often have I cried since thou wert dead
That I had let thee want a little honey
Thou couldst have had — But now thou art
returned

Thou shalt have all. It was so far to come.

MARY

Far? No, not far, I think -

A MAN

But dost thou know?

MARY

Ay! When I keep my thoughts all clean and large,

Open to sunlight as the roses are, It lies along the margin of the air With a soft shining, though I see it not. I feel it on my lips and so they smile, And in my vision and it has content, And all this common atmosphere of earth Has fragrance in it, wrought into it fair, And motion and most subtle soft delight.

LAZARUS

How thy scant dreams persuade thee! But dream on

And tell thy dreams to them that seek to learn. For he that dreams has speech to tell them with, But I — who know —

CROWD

Yes - you who know - speak on!

LAZARUS

Behold I am not asked by these alone.

My eyes have looked on death, and through all time

I see them gather that are yet to come.

Even now at hand pale lips of ruined kings

Beseech me ere they yield themselves to dust,

"Lazarus, where?" and suddenly are still.

Mothers whose hearts are broken for a child

Kneel to me, lifting up their empty hands

In everlasting pleading, crying "Where?"

Delicate damsels that were softly reared,

Docile to mirth and mother tenderness,—

When darkened, they must needs fare forth alone,—

Shrink to relinquish all their subtle flesh And seek me wildly, having cried, "Whereto?" And these are but the faint drift of a wind
That gathers round me. Oh, that wind is pale
With human faces that blow hurriedly
And cry to me in passing, and flare out
Like lightning in a gale — and still it blows,
The old strange air of them that live and die.
I hear their garments and their speeding feet,
Perilous laughter falling into sighs,
Sorrow that seeks to silence, the great shout
Of them that are triumphant, and the sob
Of him that faints by night! The keen strange
cry

Of woman bearing children, in the hedges
The cooing of doves, the sighing of the blind sod
That feels a greenness, breaking of bird's eggs,
And trembling urgencies of flower and grass—
And a little sparrow flitting to its fall—
Prattle of children, and the household speech
Of them that love each other sharply ended,
The vows of lovers, parting in the even,
And that old strange inherited despair
Of them that must do murder! How they sigh
That have forgotten, and the breaking hearts
Of them that must remember! All these sounds
Beat on me in the everlasting wind
That circles the world and time and Heaven and
Hell,

And still the burden of them is "Wherefore?"
And pale swift faces, whirling rapidly,
Flee from me speechless, having cried "Whereto"?

THE CROWD

Whereto! O Lazarus, tell us! Tell us where!

LAZARUS

Who has seen Heaven
May pass no speech upon it. I grow dumb
And helpless thinking of it, with no words
But for one only thing, and that the best,
Since that it lured me out of perfect bliss
And Heaven was not strong to keep me from it.

THE CROWD

The Christ! The Christ!

A MAN

I think it was His face
That shone upon thee. If I were dispersed
Into the various ways of sun and dew,
A portion of the slow mood of the soil

And sweet thought of the air, I would return And, reaching helpless hands out of the dust,

Gathering dimly out of stone and rain,

Would rear myself before Him if His face But shone upon the world where I abode.

LAZARUS

Nay, not the love and solace of His face.

A WOMAN

What drew thee, then? The way were cold to come

With no dear smile to lure. What better thing Bade thee from Paradise?

A MAN

It was His voice!

Ay! Were I feasting with the happy dead And shouting with great laughter, I would rise, Forgetting love and cheer for ways forlorn So that His voice called.

LAZARUS

Nay - not His voice.

A WOMAN

Thou camest all alone? What swayed thee, then, To seek our sorrow from the blessed dead?

LAZARUS

A great desire led me out alone From those assured abodes of perfect bliss. One thing more fair than they, more keen, more sweet!

And I was swayed before it helplessly,
For the desire of it; and I rose,
And stepped from those slow æons of delight
And by the way I went came seeking earth,
Seeing before my eyes one only thing —

THE CROWD

What was it, Lazarus? Let us share that thing! What was it, brother, thou didst see?

LAZARUS

A cross.

1

Sweet child, little child, where hast thou been?
"I have been to Fairyland to see the fairy queen.
Her hair shone like the sun to the girdle she had
on,

And the robe that she wore was of green."

11

Sweet child, little child, how got you there?
"Down amid the grasses I found some golden shoon

Wrought with fine work all about, gold within and gold without,

And curled at the toe like the thin crescent moon.

Ш

"Those who go in fairy shoon need not fear at all,

If they go at fall o' dew or with the break of day, If they search across the plain, up the highroad, down the lane,

But always will their feet find the way."

IV

But what hadst thou to do in sweet Fairyland,
And what didst thou say to the queen,
Whose hair shines like the sun to the girdle she
has on,

And the robe that she wears is of green?

V

"She called me her dear and her own little one, She took me and she kissed me and she rocked me on her knee,

She took off her golden crown till her hair came dropping down,

And she plucked its biggest jewel out for me."

vi

Sweet child, mine own child, is my breast so cold, That thou shouldst leave it like a bird that flies out of the storm?

"The sorrows in thy breast make it cold to give me rest,

But the bosom of the queen is always warm.

VII

"Seven girls in yellow gowns always come and go,

Stepping soft like golden rain all about the throne,

And if they go in or out, little bells chime all about,

And they gave me a bell for mine own."

VIII

But what dost thou do in sweet Fairyland,
There where the days are all so long?
"We pleasure and we sing in the palace of the king,

And thy tears I hear them not for the song."

IX

My tears are not so loud as to hear them through a song;

It is I who hear them always in my heart.

But those halls, are they not cold, piled of ivory and gold?

For thou knowest what a little child thou art.

v

"The world is never cold in sweet Fairyland,
But the sun is in the garden all the day,
And the roses always blow and the warm winds
come and go

As thick as cherry blossoms in the May."

XI

But what didst thou see in sweet Fairyland? Or art thou grown blind with the queen,

Whose hair shines like the sun to the girdle she has on,

And the robe that she wears is of green?

XII

"I saw the silver swan that once was a king,
And I played with the dryad in the tree,
But the one I loved the best, prettier than all the
rest,

Was the child that my mother used to be.

XIII

"I hugged her and I kissed her and I wanted her for mine,

I told her of my mother, and I tried to bring her home;

But she would not leave the queen with her robes that are of green,

And she ran when I tried to make her come."

XIV

Didst thou love her so, then? Talk not of her!
Tell me, in sweet Fairyland what didst thou hear?

"Bird songs and lullabies, like thine own without the sighs,

And every one I met called me 'Dear'!"

xv

Sweet child, mine own child, what shall I do?
I who am thy mother, I would I were the queen
Whose hair shines like the gold to the girdle she
has on,

And the robe that she wears is of green.

XVI

Sweet child, mine own child, for if I were the queen,

Then my bosom were not cold like the wintry storm.

Thou wouldst seek it then, and she whom thy mother used to be,

For the bosom of the queen is always warm.

XVI

"Thou shalt come to Fairyland. Prithee, wilt thou come?

I will lend thee for the day my little golden shoon Wrought with fine work all about, gold within and gold without,

And curled at the toe like the thin crescent moon."

XVIII

Little child, foolish child, what do I care
Though the toes thereof be curled like the crescent moon?

My poor feet, alas, would stray, I should never find the way,

And I cannot wear those little fairy shoon.

XIX

But I will let thee go to dear Fairyland,

I — whose bosom is too cold for to give thee rest!

Thou shalt not remember me, — but the child I used to be,

Sweet child, mine own child, wilt thou love her best?

XX

Sweet child, mine own child, wilt thou love her best,

Better than the fairy queen whose little one thou art?

But thou shalt not speak of me to the child I used to be,

Lest the sound of my tears reach her heart.

XXI

Sweet child, mine own child, get thy golden shoon. Thou shalt go to Fairyland to see the fairy queen. Her hair shines like the sun to the girdle she has on,

And the robe that she wears is of green.

A NUT SHELL

HERE is a nut shell, cinctured fine With polished groovings, line upon line, With the silken sweep of a strange design And a sculptured fate in its smooth wrought line. All the mysterious ebb and flow Of the life that surges into the tree, The vast indelible history Of generations of long ago, Are written here in the polished line And the master curves of that strange design: The dream of suns that are yet to shine, The washing of white rains yet unborn, The silences of many a morn, The rugged lightnings that shall rend The tough old fibres, and the trend Of tempests, stepping overhead! Lift in your hand the fragile shell And feel the long rush and the swell Course through its silken grooves, —the tone, And music of a wind unblown. All the cool glooms of forest trees, Their reasonings, strivings, mysteries,

Loves, deaths, and immortalities, Their green dooms and their destinies!

And one small nut shell in my hand Contains the knowledge of all these!

- When wilt thou come, belovéd? Why wilt thou always wait?
- Is it so good to tarry, that thou shouldst be so late?
- The flowers of the quinces like red dawns break apart,
- But the time it took to wake them is like frost upon my heart.
- The battlements of Heaven, are they begirt with night
- That I should fly forsaken like a faint moth towards the light?
- Past the pale flight of planets the zevel waxes loud,
- But my wings, they are grown heavy with the cold wrack of the cloud.
- Are those long aisles so lonely that reach the whole night through,
- And are thy feet grown weary with the full weight of the dew?

- Mayhap my love is blinded with suns that never set,
- While girls who have forgotten will urge him to forget.
- When wilt thou come, belovéd? Why wilt thou be so late?
- The stars drop down the morning and the night was long to wait.
- Come forth to me, belovéd. My voice shall lead thee here
- Even as a smile that follows the shedding of a tear.
- The daughters of the angels, they are more fair than I,
- Their garments are more stately, and the souls of them more high,
- The white folds of their raiment are all enwrought with calm,
- And the looks of these sweet damsels fall pleasantly as balm.
- Their golden hair all fragrant drops ruddy to their feet,
- And the flower of their laughter blooms bright along the street.

- Their lips, made red with singing, bid thee arise and come,
- While mine, grown pale with weeping, are faint to call thee home.
- Yet when they all are singing I would not have thee mute —
- I want thee to be dancing to the high strains of the flute.
- There are girls to lead the measure, there are feasts all bright with glee,
- But those ramparts of pure sunshine have shut my soul from thee.
- When wilt thou come, belovéd, why wilt thou be so late?
- My watch has seen the morning, and the night was long to wait,
- Though I have naught to give thee save what I have of fears,
- And sighs that leave no laughter, and feasts that are of tears.
- They say the old life, dearest, is like some slender tune,
- One flute note through the summer of you great, golden noon.

- They say that time shall always like a wind blow on and on,
- And touch thy timeless being with the sweetness that is gone.
- Ye daughters of the angels, smile on your golden lutes,
- Caress my love to laughter, and feed him on ripe fruits.
- Make him cool beds of lilies beside some goodly stream.
- 'T is you who make him slumber, but I will make him dream.
- My love, O my belovéd, why wilt thou always wait?
- Is it not dark in Paradise, and dost not know 'tis late?
- The shout, the feast, the dancing, will all this never cease?
- In those white years of Heaven is there no time for peace?
- Is there no peace? but always that sunshine of warm hours!
- No dropping of cool twilights like dew among the flowers,

No closes in those gardens for tarrying awhile, To dream or to remember, to weep perchance, or smile?

Thy love, which was born deathless, white, and untouched of shame,

Has sandaled me in sunshine and girdled me in flame.

Thy life shall cling forever around my life, and

A blessing on the altar that is kept fair for thee.

Those daughters of the angels, I am more fair than they!

I bear thy looks upon me as the proud dawn bears the day.

Thine eyes, they are my Heaven, through thee I breathe its breath:

And if 't is death makes lovely, have I not then thy death?

My soul seeks thine, belovéd, as a young girl seeks her love,

In the fragrance of first morning and the whiteness of the dove;

- Thy world has left forever its lingering breath on this,
- And trembles into nearness like lips grown warm to kiss.
- My world seeks thine, belovéd, as a wounded bird its nest,
- Its heart drips out in scarlet through the red spheres of the west.
- And time shall drop behind it like a small cloud from the skies
- Which hold amid their stillness no breath of centuries.
- Thou art mine own, though always those girls rove to and fro
- Who sung thee from the slumber to which I saw thee go.
- It was my hands that made thee all lovely for the sleep.
- They have filled thy mouth with laughter, but I have seen thee weep.
- Though light as from the lilies shines in their garments' hem,
- Those high and stately ladies, I have no care for them.

- The flight of their swift coming is like dawn along the skies.
- But my love still keeps the vision of the old dream in his eyes.
- I will gird up my garments and climb all shod with pain.
- My voice raised high with singing shall pierce those walls of rain.
- And they perchance will whisper, when the feast is at its height,
- "Some wanderer from the outlands is singing through the night."
- But thou but thou, belovéd so many things there be
- 'Twixt us, as in deep grasses lie the thick blooms from the tree!
- Those songs of old, the lilies, those nights that haunt me yet!
- Those dawns! What I remember, thou canst not all forget.
- But thou but thou, belovéd nay, I will call no more.
- The keen wind of the morning blows the red dawn to the door,

And thou hast come to seek me, on whom thy seal is set!

Those dawns I so remember thou canst not all forget.

AS I SHALL BE

No look as of my present shame Is on that brow of thine.' Behold in robes of holy flame How lovely dost thou shine, As a high star in dawns afar Is touched by light divine.

The look of her untroubled eyes
Has knowledge of the spheres;
That she may know them and be wise,
I toil among the years.
She could not be so glad, so free,
Were I not doomed to tears.

She may not know what roads are mine, What bitter paths afar.
Her feet among the lilies shine
As white as any star.
My feet shall bleed to serve their need
And keep them as they are.

My heart cries out uncomforted From folk that alien be, "Lo, I have broken with them the bread I should have kept for thee. Have spoiled that wine that had been thine Were there more faith in me!"

Lo, I have broken her bread and made Her wine of nothing worth.

Now prodigal and sore dismayed I seek the ends of the earth.

Though I be blind yet must I find That good she gave at birth.

Strange is her thought of Life-in-Death That works in me alway.

I know she is that living breath
God breathed into the clay,
And like a gust amid my dust
She blows me all one way.

The burden of our want and stress Upon my soul is set,
That she may know the blessedness Of them that do forget.
So the old scars of ancient wars
Are grievous in me yet.

When I went down to Hell the flame Was blood red in the skies,

But through my piteousness there came A solace to my eyes. At the pale dead I smiled and said, "She sings in Paradise."

So she may smile and never know
The perilous ways I see,
Or how from all my pain and woe
Her soul takes light from me,
Her glory wrought from my frail thought
Shall live incessantly.

Behold in robes of singing flame How is her soul confessed. The birds of light that have no name Are brooding on her breast, And soft and fair like summer air Her light has made me blessed.

THE YOUNGEST SON OF HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

THE eldest son of his father's house, His was the right to have and hold; He took the chair before the hearth, And he was master of all the gold.

The second son of his father's house, He took the wheatfields broad and fair, He took the meadows beside the brook, And the white flocks that pastured there.

"Pipe high — pipe low! Along the way From dawn till eve I needs must sing! Who has a song throughout the day, He has no need of anything!"

The youngest son of his father's house Had neither gold nor flocks for meed. He went to the brook at break of day, And made a pipe out of a reed.

"Pipe high — pipe low! Each wind that blows Is comrade to my wandering.

Who has a song wherever he goes, He has no need of anything!"

His brother's wife threw open the door.

"Piper, come in for a while," she said.

"Thou shalt sit at my hearth since thou art so poor,

And thou shalt give me a song instead!"

Pipe high — pipe low — all over the wold!

"Lad, wilt thou not come in?" asked she.

"Who has a song, he feels no cold!

My brother's hearth is mine own," quoth he.

"Pipe high—pipe low! For what care I
Though there be no hearth on the wide gray plain?
I have set my face to the open sky,
And have cloaked myself in the thick gray rain."

Over the hills where the white clouds are, He piped to the sheep till they needs must come. They fed in pastures strange and far, But at fall of night he brought them home.

They followed him, bleating, wherever he led: He called his brother out to see.

"I have brought thee my flocks for a gift," he said,

" For thou seest that they are mine," quoth he.

"Pipe high — pipe low! Wherever I go The wide grain presses to hear me sing. Who has a song, though his state be low, He has no need of anything."

"Ye have taken my house," he said, "and my sheep,
But ye had no heart to take me in.
I will give ye my right for your own to keep,
But ye be not my kin.

"To the kind fields my steps are led. My people rush across the plain. My bare feet shall not fear to tread With the cold white feet of the rain.

"My father's house is wherever I pass; My brothers are each stock and stone; My mother's bosom in the grass Yields a sweet slumber to her son.

"Ye are rich in house and flocks," said he, Though ye have no heart to take me in. There was only a reed that was left for me, And ye be not my kin."

"Pipe high — pipe low! Though skies be gray, Who has a song, he needs must roam! Even though ye call all day, all day, Brother, wilt thou come home?"

Over the meadows and over the wold, Up to the hills where the skies begin, The youngest son of his father's house Went forth to find his kin.

DREAMS

When dreams are thick in the air,
All at once — like the leaves of a rose,
Blown from a garden that nobody knows:

While in the curve of each sweet thing A sound unborn is lingering,
Then I catch up my pipes and sing.

But hey ho! nobody knows
What the wind that scatters the rose,
Nor where the garden whence it blows.

When dreams are thick in the air, In my eyes and under my feet, Soft and clinging and white and sweet,

Each one full of the whispering, The memory of some perfect thing, Then I catch up my pipes and sing.

Hey ho! wherever it goes, Chase the wind that scatters the rose, Up to the garden whence it blows.

DANIEL BROWN

THE great Lord brought to the making of man Wind and water and fire and clay. He made him to love, to hate, to plan, And bade him live for a day. He earned his bread by the sweat of his brow In the spot where the great Lord set him down. He had a wife, a house, and a cow, And his name was Daniel Brown.

He worked, reluctantly, I surmise,
Sinned if he must and did right if he could,
He fell in love in moderate wise
With a wife who was not too good.
He liked strong beef at least twice a day,
And porridge at night — so write it down.
Wind and water and fire and clay
Went to the making of Daniel Brown.

The great Lord thumbed in the barren clay, Touched the dust with a nerve of fire, Fashioned the waters and winds, they say, Wrought to His heart's desire. He hammered and built for a thousand years, A thousand more He pondered alone! Light of the eyes and smiles and tears He broke from the heart of a stone.

He gathered the dust of the ancient days
And the wistful bloom of a coming morn,
For strange is the thought and deep the ways
Ere the soul of a man be born.
"Heart of my heart," quoth He, "come out!
Thou thought of my thought, go down.
Be thou a man in the world of men,"
Quoth He to Daniel Brown.

Restless out of the night he came,
Piteous, helpless, and vague of mind.
The way of his will was an idle flame
That goes the way of the wind.
The great Lord took no thought for stitches,
Naked and nameless He dropped him down.
But he soon attired himself in breeches,
And went by the name of Daniel Brown.

For forty years he grew merry and fat, His speech was slow and his chin was double. He had six children — think of that — And his good wife never gave him trouble. His chin was heavy, his eyes were meek, He went to his work at nine on Monday, He cheated his neighbors through the week, And paid the debt to the church on Sunday.

How goes that thought that hews the stone?

How fares that dream in the heart of a man?

The great Lord smiled as He sat alone

And looked at the Thing Himself began.

How goes the thought of Thy heart's desire,

How fares Thy dream? And the Lord looked

down.

That builds in wind and clay and fire, And works in the flesh of Daniel Brown?

How goes that thought that delves in air, Through the subtle alleys of sun and rain? The heart of a man were bleak and bare If this should work in vain.

How fare Thy dreams that flit and crowd And beat in light on the eyes of men?

Shall these be frail as a little cloud That shall not come again?

But strange are the ways where their feet are led,
And strange is the drift of the shifting mood.

"And some shall travel," the great Lord said,
"Through the bitter ways of sweat and blood,"
How goes that thought that works in stone,
How fares that dream? And the Lord looked
down,

Smiled in His heart as He sat alone And beheld the spirit of Daniel Brown.

Strange are the ways through which they came! Those angels with fire about their brow, Silent and sweet in their spheres of flame, Lived once on porridge — even as thou! I have no fear at all for him.

With a robe of light and a harp and a crown, Undazed by the flames of the seraphim, Stands the shining spirit of Daniel Brown.

THE WATCH-TOWER OF THE SOUL

In the high watch-tower of the soul I tarry all day long.

The days flit by like flocks of birds, But not one has a song.

My soul has found no other soul To which it does belong.

In this deep loneliness God set

Each soul as in a shrine.

He bade his virgin she should keep

Her separate light ashine,

While others on strange hearths attend

The flames that are not mine.

When I would speak to them my voice
Falls from me like a star.

It trails their atmospheres, but not
The dim worlds where they are.

Than gulf of time or seas of space
Our souls are set more far.

My soul is girt in secrecies Like the petals of a rose.

92 THE WATCH-TOWER OF THE SOUL

My breath, which is among them, floats
On every wind that blows.
They are like sleep around a dream
There is no one that knows.

Yet that great wind that blows alway
From heart to heart will rove
Across all spirits and bear up
Some fragrances above.
I hear some voices that I know,
Some accents that I love.

I weep because I feel their tears
Blown in my eyes like rain.

My heart is touched by that which is
The faint dew of their pain.

I smile because I see them smile,
And is this all in vain?

Yet when we smile our looks are strange.
The gladness in their eyes
Like a slow dawn is in my heart,
Like a pale light in the skies.
But why they smile or why they weep,
These things are mysteries.

All night I watch from my high tower The great world come and go.

Their faces flare along the dark Like wandering stars below.

But who has seen two stars that touch?

And space has said me no.

Though his sweet presence like a light Is shed about the place,—

My love, to whom I am most near,—
I have not seen his face.

My tears, which are not his, must drop To reach his heart, through space.

He smiled and folded my two hands So close upon his breast.

"These are my doves," he said, "and so A little while shall rest."

But I, who smiled not, felt them grope
Through space — they found no nest.

He smiled and said, "Thy cheek shall lie In my hand, hollowed so!"

But I, who smiled not, felt all time A wind betwixt us blow.

I leaned my cheek into a void Of which he did not know.

94 THE WATCH-TOWER OF THE SOUL

See they not how alone we are,

Like faint clouds wandering, —

All these who have not felt the breath

Of any living thing?

Do they not know we are alone

That they should dance and sing?

I will be silent in my soul
Since God has girt me round
With His own silences in which
There is no space for sound.
Only His voice perchance may drop
Like dew upon the ground.

I will be silent and will lean
Myself into all space.
Love, didst thou think in all this life
That thou couldst touch my face?
Nay, for God bade that I should turn
Unto Himself for grace.

I will be silent, watching so
Thy love-dawn breaking red,
("I thought thy breast should warm mine own
A little while," he said.

An we were dead this might be so

An we were dead this might be so, But, love, we are not dead.)

THE WATCH-TOWER OF THE SOUL 95

In the high watch-tower of the soul I tarry all day long.

The days flit by like flocks of birds,
But not one has a song.

My soul has found no other soul
To which it does belong.

PARADISE

- "What is it like, in Paradise?"
 The look of love in your mother's eyes.
- "What do they do there all day long?"
 The little children go singing a song.
- "If I were there would I sing too?"

 Ay, shout and sing the whole day through.
- "But I'd have no toys there at all!"

 St. Peter would whittle you out a ball.
- "If there were trees could I have the fruit?"
 Apples and pears and plums to boot.
- "But I'd want you when the dusk grew deep!"
 Nay, Mary would rock my child to sleep.
- "But surely, mother, I'd want you yet!"
 My darling, no! For you would forget.
- "Forget? Is that so good a thing?"
 Better than flowers in the spring.

- "But if I saw you over the wall?"
 You would not cry for me at all.
- "In Paradise should I never cry?"
 They only laugh those folk that die.
- "Then let me go to that dear place!"

 Nay I'll keep you yet by God's good grace.
- "Apples and pears I'd have, you say!"
 Bitter my bread, yet shall you stay.
- "But I cried to-day for a spoiled game!"
 I'd have you cry and live the same.
- "But they laugh and run beneath the tree!"
 Your heart shall break yet stay with me!
- "Mother, O mother, let me go!"
 Nay now, my child, for I love you so.

A VISION IN THE NIGHT

O PARADISE, depart!
Why bidest thou with me?
Thy petals sting my face that drop
From off thy Holy Tree.

Thou strange and lovely face
Across my spirit blown,
Oh, get thee hence a little space,
And let my soul alone.

Be still, ye angel's wings
That stir this golden air.
My heart is broken for this world
That God has made too fair.

These wounds of strange delight
I cannot comfort them!
Let me withdraw into some night
Nor touch thy garment's hem.

TO LOVELINESS

O LOVELINESS, that softly glows Along the blooming of the rose,

That has a heart for darkened things And over shadows lays its wings,

That loves amid deep grass to rest And lingers in the ground bird's breast,

That strangely shed upon a stone Makes it a darling of her own,

That leaves an angel in the hush And Pentecost upon the sea, That makes a bard out of a tree, A temple from a burning bush,

That lifts from out the troubled soil A smiling face on them that toil,

That has a home in littleness And with a dear touch will caress Small pebbles and frail water-cress, And young bird's down and butterflies! All these she blesses and will bless!

That mocks us, most elusive fair, In simple oracles of air,

That in the peace of some still place With subtle hands will touch my face,

And from the thick leaves of a tree With haunting eyes will gaze on me,

That silken soft and dream-enwrought Lends her strange color to a thought,

And fitful, in her own good time, Lays a scant blessing on a rhyme! Briefly it flowers and blushes, then She gets her to her dust again!

Pilgrim art thou and fit to roam!
And yet I know not any home
Save thou art there. Then let me rove
Unhoused like thee, O sweet my love!
No other friend I 'll know nor see
Save only thee and thee and thee,
If only, thou wilt hold my hand
The one known thing in this strange land.

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SUCH ARE THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

THREE days she wandered forth from me, Then sought me as of old.

"I did not know how dark 't would be," She sobbed, "nor yet how cold.

"And it is chill for me to fare
Who have not long been dead.

If thou wouldst give away my cloak,
I might go comforted."

I would have soothed her on my breast, But that she needs must go. The dead must journey without rest, Whether they will or no.

But I had kept for love of her
The cloak she wore, the shoes,
And every day I touched the things
She had been wont to use.

All night the dead must hurry on.
They may not ever sleep.
And so I gave away her cloak
I was so fain to keep.

The second time she sought me out Her eyes were full of need. "If thou wouldst give away my shoes Perchance I should not bleed."

I cried to her aloud, "My child,
They are all I have to keep,
To lay my hand upon and touch
At night before I sleep.

The earth shall keep the body I bore
And Heaven thy soul. I may not choose.
Let be — I ask a little thing,
That I should keep thy shoes.

But I will give away my own.

Lord, Lord, wilt thou not see?

Let thou her road to Paradise

This way be eased by me."

All night alone by brier and stone I ran that road unshod,

So I might know instead of her The pains that lead to God.

When next she came for a brief space, She tarried at my side, So happy was she in that place, So glad that she had died.

"The last night that I roamed," she said
"Some one had gone before.

I followed where those feet had led,
And found it rough no more.

"And then I came to a good place, So kind, so dear are they I may not come again," and so She smiled and went away.

Dear Christ, who died to save us all,
Who trod the ways so cold and wild,
The love of Mary in thy heart
Did let me ease my child.

She may not leave that place of bliss,
I may not touch her hands and hair,
But every night I touch and kiss
The shoes she used to wear.

THE PIPER'S MORROW

Up and down and here and there
Went the piper playing,
All he knew to tune his air
And keep the flocks from straying.
"Piper, cease," and "Piper, cease,"
Quoth the folk with sorrow,
"Labor now and get thee peace
And plenty for the morrow."

Homeward came the laborers strong,
Heavy harvest bringing,
Up and down and all along
Strayed the piper singing.
Oft the good dame from her door
Watched him thence with sorrow,
But he only sang the more
And minded not the morrow.

Slow the laborers from the plain Bring their fruits delaying, And the good wife waits in vain For an idler's playing. Flocks are wandering on the hill, Timid with their sorrow, And the piper, smiling still, Has gone to meet his morrow.

A KISS AFTER LAPSE OF MEMORY

Names, names! With what elusive wings
A moment poised on their own things
And then away as a bird sings
Above a flower. I have forgot
So many sweets,— and what is this?
Wait, I remember! 'T is a—

Nay!

So small a word and flown away!

How softly crowd the smiling faces
That are the names of these dear places!
How swift to bless and bid me bide
So long a pilgrim and outside
This quaint good house of speech. But there—
Oh, the great peace of that strange air
That had no name, yet was so fair!
And nothing in it had a name,
Yet whirling rapidly there came
Like smiles and roses, things of flame,
Blowing, ah whither, whither? So
Soft presences would come and go
Leaving a preciousness to pain,

Poised round about like light that clings
For aureole to martyred things,
Or that gray loveliness that sings
A comfort to the heart of the rain.
Those were angelic ones. But this—
So earthly warm! It is a—

Nay!

So small a word and flown away!

O world new-born, that dost arise Out of a vast forgetfulness! I look on thee with Adam's eyes And find thee good, and name and bless. Yet it is true that as it grows Familiar, named, a spirit goes Softly away like dew from a rose. That look of thee that strangely smiled Has grown familiar - wine and bread For something lost! Where has it fled? Plain folk about, woman and child, Where there were splendors! Ah, who knows? Named, named! But not to be beguiled! And this, the sweet, if I should name it, Not such again might I reclaim it! Oh, whyfore with a word defame it?

Poor me, that needs must phrase a bliss! Again — again! Oh, what is this?

108 A KISS AFTER LAPSE OF MEMORY

Wait — I remember! 'T is a —

Nay!

So small a word and flown away!

Strange sweet, that seemeth to have wings!
What infinite swift flutterings
Are in it! Ah, but how it stings!
But speak it not, for then grown wise,
Knowledge must come to blind my eyes
And I shall lose the great first-breath,
First-look, first-love! As if one saith,
"These things, once told, must suffer death."
Names flash like swords before my eyes,
An Eve that wants her Paradise.

Eve, Eve — that needs must pluck a fruit So to get knowledge! What is this? Wait, I remember! 'T is a —

Nay!

So small a word and flown away.

Swift is it on my lips and brow. Beneath it verily I seem

To dream!

A moment? Hours? Years?
These all are in it and the spheres
Are not more perfect. Nay, nor tears!

A KISS AFTER LAPSE OF MEMORY 109

Oh, many folk am I—their times
Blow through me and their loves, their fears.
Who touched me then?
It was I, Adam, touched thee, Eve.
Love, love, I could not well believe.
But Thou, that ever smilest so?
I am that one that needs must go
From thy lips, Judas.

Be it so.

Oh, break the spell and give the name Or I am broken for love and shame And glory of it!

Peace: be still.

I guess thee, sweet! Lay by thy wings, Lose thy dear marvels, pleasures, stings, And be of these quaint human things One of the dearest. Be to me A caged wild bird that never sings. Be human, foolish, fond, for so I'll have the speech to tell!

But oh,

For the fleet wings that come and go, The swift delight, terror, and woe!

I do remember. What is this? Wait — Nay, but speak it —

'T is a kiss.

THE SONS OF CAIN

God that we serve with blood, how long
Shall the old debt remain?
How long shall we to soothe Thy lust
Present Thee with our slain?
Lo, our hearts break from day to day
Who are the sons of Cain.

This earth begets a living fruit
To him that laboreth.
He brought its innocence, its smiles,
Its sweet and pleasant breath.
In paradise this might have been,
But Thou didst ask for death.

He had not thought to slay the lambs
That played about his knee.
He did not know a wounded kid
Was a sight so fair to see,
Nor that the blood of trembling hinds
Would seem so good to Thee.

But since Thou wouldst have blood, behold!

And yet Thou art not stayed,

For we have slain each man his brother And made Thy beasts afraid. And thy good earth has sweat with blood. Lord, Lord, art Thou not paid?

We serve Thee to the ends of earth
Obedient to Thy word;
We blow the scattered folk like chaff,
The lightning in our sword;
For still we feel amid our flesh
The whirlwind of the Lord.

The restless peoples that flared forth
Have flickered out alone;
For as the fire consumes the flax
Our breath did fall thereon.
Thy flame is in our mouths, O God,
Thy fires are in our bone.

And still our shameful tribe drives on,
Made alien from our birth,
And in our laughter there are tears
And crying in our mirth,
And when we till the soil we raise
Old dead men from the earth.

As once I housed me with my kin
And sweetly there would bide,
I kissed my brother, knowing well
The thing that would betide.
I slept at night upon his breast,
Yet by my hand he died.

We spoke that night of pleasant things,
Our souls were clean and fair,
And the sharp bliss of angel's wings
Was round us in the air,
When that old thought must raise its head
Out of a hidden lair.

And when that thought had raised its head,
The room seemed strangely bright.
The books, the walls, stood sharply forth
As in a different light.
My brother's face was not the same,

I could not bear the sight.

And once he whispered in the night,
"Brother, I have a fear,"
And I replied, who knew the end,
"Sleep thou, for I am here."
And thrice he whispered, drawing close,
"O Brother, be thou near."

And thrice he quavered in the dark,
"Art thou not near?" he said.
"Ay, close at hand," I answered. "Sleep,
And be thou comforted."
And well I wot that this was so,
Knowing that he was dead.

And all night long his silent face
Did cleave the dark in twain,
And by that constant light I prayed
With babbling tongue and vain.
By such strange tapers do they pray
That are the sons of Cain.

And as he lay with arms outstretched
So straight on either side,
He looked as gaunt as any cross
Whereon a man has died,
And to that awful cross I clung
Where he was crucified.

Out through the fog the great north sun Flared red at break of day,
And where the level ice floes run
Was white and black and gray,
And twenty men went from our ship,
And all went forth to slay.

For man is lord of all that is
In earth and sea and sky,
And there is never a gentle thing
But that it needs must die.
So all our ways are tracked with blood
And blood they know us by.

And we would kill the wistful seal
That bode in simple-wise.
The mother feared me not, but took
The blow in mute surprise,
While her young seal looked up at me
With great tears in its eyes.

The crying of that little seal
Was like a child in need.
Pity was on me and I wept
That I should do that deed,
But still the want in me cried out,
And so I let it bleed.

It looked at me with gentle eyes,
I would have turned away.
God, Thy desire in me was strong
That I must needs obey.
Since Thou didst give the lust for blood,
What could I do but slay?

And swift the great north fog drove down
And found me there alone.

Its strange white bulwarks walled me round
That were more stout than stone.

And the dead seal stared up at me
With eyes that met my own.

The fog against my lips was cold
As the bodies of dead men.
I thought I kissed a murdered thing
That wallowed in a fen.
I spat the taste out of my mouth
And found it there again.

And strange as death the great north fog
Swept down the great ice floe.
It shut me in from sight and hid
The roads where I might go.
The cold was in my brain and bone
And I was vague and slow.

But at my feet the little seal
Did save me, being dead.
The wound about its piteous heart
Was gaping wide and red.
I plunged my hands in its warm breast,
And so was comforted.

O Christ, whose flesh inclined to bear, So must it ever be.

It was the life of that dead seal That warmed the life in me.

I clung about its bleeding breast As if it had been Thee.

Lord Christ, whose flesh inclined to bear
That Thou mightst ease our pain,
With this poor seal, mid snow and ice,
Behold, how art Thou slain;
For still our need is all for blood
Who are the sons of Cain.

She that I love all dearness has,
All wisdom in her eyes.
With her fair hands she keeps my soul
In its first Paradise.
Her large looks cleanse my thoughts as dawn
Makes perfect the dim skies.

She knows that when I die, her heart
Is the Heaven where I go,
That through her eyes I look on God
And through her thoughts I know.
Yet once I said, "My weary love,
What burden grieves thee so?"

Now God had wrought a Paradise
Where we might always be,
And well she knows for love of her
My soul is good to see.
"A broken heart," she said, "Dear Love,
That got a wound from thee."

For there's never a man that loves a woman But breaks her heart in twain.

Yet will she smile with pitying eyes,

Knowing it not in vain,

For men must wound before they love,

That are the sons of Cain.

God that we serve with blood, we take
Our hearts betwixt our hands
And rend them surely that they break,
Obeying Thy commands,
And all the years are stained with red
And red is on the lands.

O Christ, whose flesh inclined to bear
That Thou mightst ease our pain,
There is a long and bitter road
That lies betwixt us twain,
For Thou wouldst save but we must kill,
Who are the sons of Cain.

Thou art not of us, though Thy wounds
Were hard for thee to keep.
Thou hast not known the wounds of sin
That sink so sure and deep.
Beside the grief that lies in them
Thy woe is kind as sleep.

Thou art not of us, for Thy hand
Has bruised no piteous thing.

If Thou hadst killed, but once, in thought,
Thou hadst known sorrowing.

But one may taste Gethsemane,
Yet still escape the sting.

Thou didst not drink the wine of life,
Although Thy wine was red.
Thou didst not eat the bread of life,
Though bitter was Thy bread.
Thou didst not feel the death of sin,
Only Thy flesh was dead.

Dear Heart of Christ, it is not Thou
That bears for us the blame,
But Judas knows the love, the want,
The woe through which we came,
And Judas with the eyes like ours
Has drunk our cup of shame.

They say that John did love Thee most.

I say it was not so,
But he that with a broken heart

Kissed Thee and let Thee go.
For I, whose flesh is wrought like his,

I know, Lord Christ, I know.

The wounds upon Christ's hands and feet
Hold no such balm for me.
Judas, thy breast shall give me rest
With heart pierced utterly.
If thou hast trod the roads to God
Then might I go, with thee.

And God looked down. About His throne
Strong winds of angels blow,
But He heard the wailing of the tribes,
And a woman's heart beat low,
And He heard the crying of the seal
Upon the great ice floe.

And Christ looked down from His high Heaven,
Deep and serene, and smiled.
And Judas with the eyes like ours
Stood near Him, undefiled.
He leaned his head on the breast of Christ
Like any wistful child

For of that one we hurt, we learn
Forgiveness from its eyes.
Since only Death could teach us love
By Death we shall grow wise.
We know not why — but only those
That are the Sacrifice.

For there is a love surpassing woman's

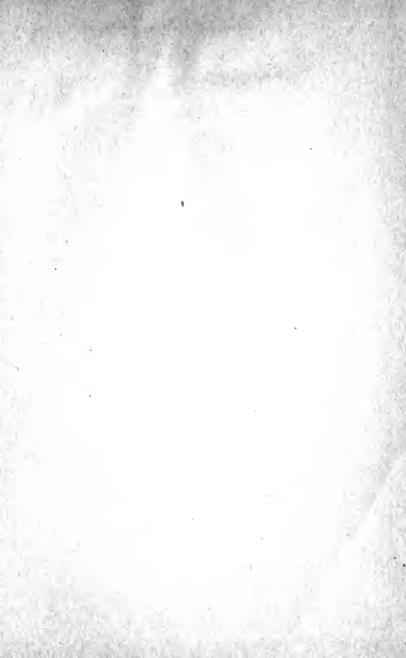
That lies betwixt those twain.

It was born out of a stricken heart

And fathered upon pain,

The strange great love that surely grows

'Twixt the Slayer and the Slain,



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